



## TILL WE MEET AGAIN

Seven years now I have been writing this column for the makers of Marlboro Cigarettes, and each year when I come to the last column of the year, my heart is gripped by the same bittersweet feeling. I shall miss you sorely, dear readers, in the long summer days ahead. I shall miss all you freckle-faced boys with frogs in your pockets. I shall miss all you pig-tailed girls with your gap-toothed giggles. I shall miss you one and all—your shining morning faces, your apples, your marbles, your jacks, your little oilcloth satchels.

But I shall not be entirely sad, for you have given me many a happy memory to sustain me. It has been a rare pleasure writing this column for you all year, and I would ask every one of you to come visit me during the summer except there is no access to my room. The makers of Marlboro Cigarettes, after I missed several deadlines, walled me in. All I have is a mail slot into which I drop my columns and through which they supply me with Marlboro Cigarettes and such food as will slip through a mail slot. (For six months now I have been living on after-dinner mints.)

I am only having my little joke. The makers of Marlboro have not walled me in. They could never do such a cruel thing. Manly and muscular they may be, and gruff and curt and direct, but underneath they are men of great heart and sweet, compassionate disposition, and I wish to take this opportunity to state publicly that I will always have the highest regard for the makers of Marlboro Cigarettes, no matter how my lawsuit for back wages comes out.

I am not having my little joke. I am not suing the makers of Marlboro for back wages. These honorable gentlemen

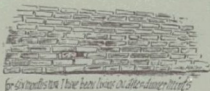
have always paid me promptly and in full. To be sure, they have not paid me in cash, but they have given me something far more precious. You would go far to find one so covered with tattoos as I.

I am only having my little joke. The makers of Marlboro have not covered me with tattoos. In fact, they have engraved no commercial advertising whatsoever on my person. My suit, of course, is another matter, but even here they have exercised taste and restraint. On the back of my suit, in unobtrusive neon, they have put this fetching little jingle:

*Are your taste buds out of kilter?  
 Are you bored with smoking, neighbor?  
 Then try that splendid Marlboro filter,  
 Try that excellent Marlboro flavor!*

On the front of my suit, in muted phosphorus, are pictures of the members of the Marlboro board and their families. On my hat is a small cigarette girl crying, "Who'll buy my Marlboro?"

I am only having my little joke. The makers of Marlboro have been perfect dolls to work for, and so, dear readers,



*For six months now I have been living on after-dinner mints*

have you. Your kind response to my nonsense has warmed this old thorax, and I trust you will not find me soggy if in this final column of the year, I express my sincere gratitude.

Have a good summer. Stay healthy. Stay happy. Stay loose.

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*The makers of Marlboro and the new unfiltered king-size Philip Morris Commander have been happy to bring you this uncensored, free-wheeling column all year long. Now, if we may echo old Max: Stay healthy. Stay happy. Stay loose.*



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